



AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 13, 2018 meeting minutes following the Agricultural Leaders Luncheon

Agenda items are Bolded and un-bolded represents the discussion from the meeting.

Attendance: Doug Lechliden, Linda Lewis, Jane Evans, Eleanor Leak, Michele Cropp, Angie McNally, Ben Butler, Pete Driscoll, Leonard Yourman, Steve Robinson-guest

Shelly Ingram Equestrian, Outreach Coordinator Resigned-We received approval on the request for a waiver from the County's Hiring Freeze due the position funded from Water Quality Protection Surcharge which is non-tax supported. The recruitment announcement has also been prepared to move forward ASAP.

Jeremy has received several inquiries as to when we hope the new person will start and these people said that Shelly was very good in working with the equestrian community.

On July 23, 2018, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development-PHED Committee unanimously approved ZTA 18-03 Farm Alcohol Production Facilities. The Full Council will review this ZTA after Labor Day. The Council may request a Strategic Plan from the agricultural agencies to create incentives for farmers to plant specialty crops that will be used for farm alcohol production.

Jeremy said that additional amendments to the ZTA 18-03 are pending that the PHED Committee recommended.

The 29th Annual Farm Tour with 19 farms were open to the public July 28-29, 2018. We had great weather all weekend with good turnouts at the farms.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices/Resources/Files/Farm_tour/Farm_Tour_2018/FarmTour2018Proof.pdf

Jane Evans said she was impressed with the events and activities offered at Tusculum Farm. Jane said this was the first time she visited the farm and there were many families with children having fun at the farm while she was there.

After seven meetings, the Agritourism Advisory Committee has agreed to recess during July and August to allow time for the consultant to complete its work and recommendations. The ASAC has agreed to reconvene in September to review the recommendations of the consultant. Last week, we received draft recommendations from the Consultant on a select number of County jurisdictions from around the USA that have agritourism programs and regulations. Due to the County Agricultural Fair week, Jeremy



Criss asked for an extension to provide feedback that was originally set for Friday August 17, 2018.

Jeremy said the deadline for providing comments was extended to August 24, 2018. The consultant's report included the agritourism venues offered by Howard, Frederick, Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties. The jurisdictions from other states included California, Washington, Virginia and Oregon.

County Council Confirmation for appointment to Rustic Roads Advisory Committee-Lonnie Luther new farmer member.

County Council Confirmation of appointments to the Agricultural Advisory Committee-new farmers-Susan Butler, Ben Butler, and Angie McNally, new non-farmers-Zach Ferguson and Leonard Yourman.

On August 2, 2018, the OAG and the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board conducted interviews for hiring a new Farmland Preservation Administrator which is John Zawitoski's former position. The OHR approved the equity study for the Business Development Specialists in the OAG-James Harne, Shelly Ingram's vacant position and the new farmland preservation manager. The OHR will be making a former job offer shortly.

On August 8, 2018, the OAG discussed with Delegate Eric Luedtke and the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, the proposed legislation for the 2019 MD Legislative Session. Specifically-Removing the existing 5 year "look back loop hole" for the State Agricultural Transfer Tax where developers avoid paying this State Agricultural Transfer Tax used for farmland preservation. This is an internal discussion on whether this approach is politically possible.

Jeremy said he was trying to make sure that potential legislation offered by Delegate Luedtke for 2019 is included in the Montgomery County Farm Bureau Policy Development recommendations. Last year the MCFB policy recommendations did not include the two state bills that Delegate Luedtke sponsored HB 396 and HB 620. Only HB 620 passed, and it enables the Counties to retain local shares of agricultural transfer taxes for a total of 5 years before they must remit unused amounts to the State-MDA.

The MNCPPC has begun to update the County's 1964 General Plan which is known as the Wedges and Corridors Plan. The OAG will be interviewed by the consultant on August 21, 2018.

Jeremy said that he offered some suggestions to the consultant and the planning staff that pertained to County tax policies that discourage farming in the wedges areas of the General Plan.

On August 29, 2018, the MDA will be holding a meeting at the AHFP on the Chesapeake Bay Water Shed Improvement Program-WIP III Goals. The agricultural agencies are concerned that nutrient reduction goals will increase at a time when farmers are demonstrating real progress on reductions of phosphorous and sediment. The urban sectors need to do more to reduce nutrients that are coming from waste water discharges and nutrients applied in the urban areas. Chuck has flyers for the MDA meeting.

Jeremy said that County farmers need to attend this meeting to provide input on the new WIP goals that will impact farming operations in the County. The OAG and MSCD have prepared some background information and talking points for farmers to discuss with representatives from the MDA during the question and answer session.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

70th Montgomery County Agricultural Fair-August 10-18, 2018

Agricultural Leaders Luncheon-Monday August 13, 2018

Ag Advisory Committee-August 21, 2018 @ 7:00pm-CANCELLED

Public meeting- River Road-August 21, 2018 @7:00pm Lewis Orchard Farm Market

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Supervisors-September 4, 2018@ 7:00pm

MSCD Cooperators Dinner-September 5, 2018 at 5:00pm Billy Willard's Shop

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-September 11, 2018 @7:00pm

Ag Advisory Committee-September 18, 2018 @ 7:00pm-Holy Cross Hospital